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Not What The Doctor Ordered

The U.S. Peace Corps' young and supposedly helping hand has been slapped hard by Dr. Hastings Banda, prime minister of the tiny African state of Malawi.

While Dr. Banda is in accord with the Peace Corps' stated objectives — education and helping the people of their host countries help themselves—he is highly critical of the American volunteers' beatnik-type attire and fraternization that goes beyond the call of duty. The involvement of corpsmen in local African politics is another sore point with Dr. Banda.

According to Dr. Banda, himself a model of deportment in dress and demeanor, the proper relationship between the Peace Corps personnel and the Africans they serve should be that of doctor to patient or teacher to pupil.

If the corpsmen are going native, as Dr. Banda so caustically observes, then Sargent Shriver may have to turn his missionary work inward on his own personnel. After all, aren't the young volunteers supposed to lead the natives away from primitivism and into the age of enlightenment? They can hardly fulfill that responsibility if they expend their energies playing "Tarzan and Jane" and making like junior-grade CIA operatives in the political area.

It's Dr. Banda's country, and he has every right to blow the whistle on Peace Corps deportment. If the Peace Corps is going to measure up to the ideals set for itself, its members had better grow up, spruce up and shape up. If they got the unkempt hair out of their eyes, maybe they could see what they're doing.